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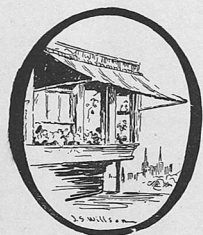
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## A SKY-PARLOR OR A BACHELOR'S DEN.

BY HESTER M. POOLE.



UT of the clangor and din of the lower world, up into the region where a broad horizon stretches on every side and a blue sky overarches all, this grows to be a longing in the hearts of all true lovers of the beautiful who are entombed within the brick walls of our caravansaries. Every year new buildings, stretching heavenward, shut out more and more the air and sunshine. Every year the city streets of our modern Babylons take on more veritably the appearance of streets quarried out of

marble and stone. And it has grown to be a question of moment how one can live within the shadow of these enormously tall structures and yet preserve a dim recollection of what the wide, free, outer world of winds and clouds, of lights and shadows, may be like.

In the case under consideration that question has been answered. A man of the world, a business man, alert and active in his avocation during many hours of the day, has yet found opportunity to create for himself space and atmosphere entirely lifted above the gloomy shadows, the luring care, the noise and hurry of the street below. It is in order to give suggestions how other poets at heart, lovers of nature, while yet engrossed in the absorbing necessities of business pursuits, may pitch a metaphorical tent on loftier heights surrounded by serene spaces. Then for an hour now and then, "the world forgetting by the world forgot," it is possible to have a truer and profounder life than can be lived amidst the friction and jangle incident upon constant association with one's fellows.

The scene is laid upon the roof of a large apartment house on the west side of New York. In the eighth or upper story is situated a small but pleasant suite ornamented with much taste, with the flotsam and jetsam accumulated during many years by this devotee of the antique, the odd and the beautiful. After a long residence in these rooms he aspired to go up higher, and against many difficulties with builders and carpenters succeeded.

With the consent of the owner, a scuttle in the roof over his sitting-room was made and fitted with a stairway about as steep as a ladder or a ship's gangway. Over it, under his direction, was built a sky-parlor, standing out in bold relief upon the top of the building which it dominates.

This lofty room, more than one hundred and thirty feet from the ground, is about fifteen feet square. To the height of a yard from the floor, which is laid flat upon the roof, the room is tightly and doubly ceiled or wainscoted with a space between. From this wainscoting to the top the entire quadrangle on the four sides is fitted with glazed windows. These at a touch can be lowered into and between the double walls, leaving the sky-parlor open to the cool breath of the winds that play over the summer-heated city. In the winter an outer set of windows is secured some fifteen inches from the inner, thus imprisoning the needed heat, attracting the rays of the sun, and affording a delightful all-the-year garden.

For this space is filled, on the three sunny sides, with deep boxes as receptacles of rich earth, whence grow a large variety of blooming plants and vines, making on all the days of the year a bower of graceful loveliness. Here and there barrels filled with soil reinforce the narrower receptacles and afford nourishment for large roots, whence grow roses, honeysuckles and passion vines, filling the air with fragrance and feeding the eye with loveliness. Between them bud and bloom the convolvulus, the phlox, the carnation, forget-me-not, the pitcher-plant and the nasturtium, while violets and pansies peep beneath their larger fellows. It seems as if these blossomed fresher and fuller here than elsewhere, as if enjoying their coign of vantage and having a sense of their noble situation.

For indeed they are rooted and grow to maturity in a spot rarely beautiful. Anear this building, over which they lean and caress, is none so high, so that for a long distance the eye ranges over the wide-spread scene. On the west the waters of the Hudson sparkle in the sunshine, with roofs and picturesque

chimneys between streets stretching like lines upon the checker board. The bay with its busy water craft on the south is edged with the dim shores of Staten Island, while against the blue vista the Statue of Liberty illuminates the gateway of the metropolis. On either side the shores of Long Island and New Jersey are visible, while on the North and East are seen those wonderful acres upon acres of houses which are filled with a surging throng of people whose active minds and hands are building the metropolis of the new world.

Among other remarkable structures we see arise the graceful spires of the Cathedral, that poem carved into a thing of beauty from the frozen stone, and many another, as picturesque breaks of the outline, silhouetted against the sky, while the argosies of commerce flit along the glistening waterways noiseless and shadowy in the distance. The entire horizon is dreamlike and suggestive beyond description. Seen between the vivid colors of buds, blossoms and leafage that hem in the room, these vistas are wonderful.

The parlor itself is a symphony in tender willow-green. The woodwork, painted a slightly deeper shade than appears in the furnishings, affords the color base. Above the railing surrounding the stairway is a table, and a couple of others stand on two sides bearing books and bric-a-brac. The former, we notice, are poems in prose or rhyme, woven upon the one great theme of nature. Along the north side of the den, where alone there is no window garden, inclosed by wire, is a playground for a snow-white dog, who stops frolicking to come and lift his affectionate head against the panes for the visitor's caress. On the southern side, outside the parlor, in a small, corresponding plot, is a sand-strewn yard, where a motherly hen clucks to the solitary chick that absorbs all her maternal cares. These yards are directly upon the roof of the apartment house. One corner has been filched from the south garden for a box, filled with sand, for the Brownie to take her dry bath, and from it a diminutive ladder leads aloft to her snug little nest and roost. These are situated in the angle of the gable, and the lofty perch and home of the gentle bird are snug and warm in the dreariest winter day. This gable, like the wainscoting, is made double, and the inner portion opens like a door on hinges. Here the master of Brownie can rifle the nest, if he chooses, while she feeds below. At present she broods her charge in a box directly upon the roof. The little dame feels her ownership of the eyrie, and, relying on human kindness, refuses companionship of her kind.

These touches of domestic life and a rural home isolated between the earth and the stars give a pathetic token of man's kinship with animals and their dependence upon him. In this case both dog and Brownie are a portion of the outer furnishing of the sky pavilion.

The others are simple enough, yet effective. Here is a bamboo lounge, broad and long, so as to serve as a couch on warm summer nights. No matter how sultry and breathless the city, steeped in tropical balm, how the wandering airs are always awake. To play through and around this charmed spot is old Eolus' delight, and he breathes upon it freshness from the restless tides and the surging ocean, while below the unsleeping multitude strive in vain to cool their fevered lungs with unspoiled air. In all senses it is good to be above the world, to breathe a purer atmosphere, both physical and mental.

It was a happy thought for the denizen of this lofty room to fix upon green for the coloring. The lounge in yonder corner, heavily mattressed, is covered with willow-green yachting cloth, edged with a suitable woolen fringe. Around the windows are sash curtains of the same soft green, a color so suggestive of gardens on a level with the earth and so welcome and restful to the eye. They are of denim, and the ground color has been etched with an acid, not corrosive enough to destroy the texture, but enough to leave the ground work its original ivory white. The figure is some four inches across, and the pattern is of handsome geometrical interlacings. These serve to keep out the glare of the sun, though they seldom need to be extended. They are reinforced by a narrow green-striped awning on the three sunny sides. This can be rolled up at pleasure. In fact, there is provided every comfort for the weary dreamer. Here is a huge stuffed easy chair, a Rip Van Winkle snuggery, upholstered in green, with footstool to match, and smaller chairs of various sizes to suit many moods.

As the roof is pitched in the fashion of other house roofs, the rafters and under boards are dextrously covered with green burlaps, having the same shade as the couch covers. In fact, yachting cloth, burlap and denim have been found at different shops in the same soft shades. Each material is delightful in just the place where it is used. The denim, over a soft carpet filling, covers floor, stairway and thresholds, but it is a plain denim, as alone would be suitable under foot.

On the north gable, opposite the staircase, as shown in the accompanying sketch, are a series of shelves, where, arranged by the artistic hand of the owner, are treasures from the Old World and the New. In the center hangs the lion decoration of the South Sea Islander, flanked on one side by trophies from Cyprus, Rhodes and Egypt, on the other by characteristic

representing the opposite poles of two dissimilar yet curious races. Beside them stand volumes of Thackeray, of Lamb, and of those transcripts of nature that embody the picturesque and the artistic of every nation and age.

For instance, in the left-hand corner is the large, light head covering of the Japanese, that happens to be painted in stripes of soft green. Everything seems to have been attracted to this place in accordance with the law that like attracts like and that those who appreciate shall find at every corner the things they crave. And so this gentleman, hearing a name admired and known by all lovers of true poesy, the other day, in passing by an auction shop, chanced to spy that lantern now hanging from the mid-ceiling. It is a beautifully incised octagon of brass in open-work of fine workmanship. Through its open-



PARLOR ON ROOF OF THE WINDERMERE APARTMENT HOUSE, NEW YORK. DRAWN BY JESSIE WILLSON.

treasures from our American Indians. Here is a doll taken from the tomb of one of the Pharaohs, there a pipe made and once used by a near relation of Sitting Bull. The wooden stem, some two feet long, is wound with brilliantly colored, narrow thongs of leather, and the large mouthpiece is baked clay of a fine terra cotta red.

Waving from one of the rafters, as shown in the sketch, is the graceful fringe of a fluffy, richly-toned Texas grass, while on the left is a curious hand-woven straw hanging from Japan. In the center of the gable a grotesque head of Wedgewood pottery grieves in sardonic joy over accumulations gathered from the uttermost parts of the earth. Beside the rude pottery of our Indians stands the finely engraved brasses of Benares—

ings, covered with soft rose transparencies, glows gaslight, instead of the soft tapers of the Orient, illuminating with dream-like lights and shadows this resting place above the multitude.

But to be really appreciated the roof garden must be visited when the full moon sheds her splendor over the great city. Then it is that all that is poetic and thought-hunting spreads its filmy veil over the scene, so that one might well imagine himself transported to the Golden Horn, or to be the victim of an illusory spell of an Eastern necromancer.

"If thou would see this scene ar'ight,  
Go visit it by pale moonlight,"

and behold a transformation as wonderful as any described in the Arabian Nights.